

Great Britain

A CALM and RELIGIOUS

ADDRESS

4476. C. 38

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To the DISCORDANT INHABITANTS

Of G. BRITAIN, and its N. AMERICAN Colonies :

Pointing out the Source of our threatening Woes, (multiplied enormous Sins!) and inviting, at This important CRISIS, to Repentance, instead of mutual inflammatory Resentments.

Shall a Trumpet be blown in the City, and the People not be afraid? Shall there be Evil [PUNITIVE] in a City and the Lord hath not done it? Amos iii, 6.

We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us, For we have sinned against the Lord our God. Jerem. iii, 25.—For our Transgressions are multiplied before Thee and our sins testify against us: For our Transgressions are with us, (our Consciences witness the sad Truth) and as for our Iniquities we know them. Isaiah lix. 12.

—Shall I yet again go out to Battle against the Children of Benjamin my Brother, or shall I cease? Judges xx. 28.

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TH E all holy, sin-avenging God in his all-wise Providence brings to pass that Mens own wickedness shall correct them; make them feed upon worm-wood, and have water of gall for their drink. He chastiseth sometimes by those who are greater Offenders than the corrected, and will not let his back-sliding People go unpunished.—The Inhabitants of Gibeab and the Tribe of Benjamin, which supported those atrocious sons of Belial, were, doubtless, offenders in the highest class; yet were they awful instruments of Providence to chasten all the other tribes of Israel. A first and second victory was granted them (vile as those wicked men were) until Forty thousand of the eleven Tribes fell by the Sword, tho' they had sought to God for direction in their proceedings and had received commission to fight. How solemnly mysterious was this!—

It had been much more so if Benjamin had been victorious in the end; but this God forbid, and in a Third Battle gave Israel such signal success that it issued almost in the extirpation of their Brother Benjamin; and, Tremendous consideration! above Sixty thousand men of the twelve Tribes were cut off during that inflamed CIVIL WAR. What sorer Judgment from God on a Kingdom (unless it be to be given up to hardness of heart, total insensibility and fearfulness of conscience, so as to have no fear of God, no belief of a Judgment to come, of the joys of Heaven or the torments of Hell) what on earth more horrid than CIVIL WAR? Here it is most true,

The Conqueror and the Conquer'd share,
The direful Punishments of War.

And shall we be insensible of the gathering storm, so threatening in the British Empire? Should we not hear the voice of

Bello sunt Pax utriusque Partis. Sape fit in Bellis quod Adagio dicitur, Ut Vicius Viciat, & Vicius Viciat. Ut Bello sint Paxque tam Victori, quam Vici.

of the Rod, and who hath appointed it? and learn our Duty? Ought we not to sit down and consider, as under the eye of the Heart-searching God;

I. Do not personal and national sins so abound, and the enormous depravity of the rising generation so display itself, as to excite Fear in the breasts of the most religious, virtuous and wise, that the Judgments of God are near, even at the door. *My flesh trembleth for fear of Thee, and I am afraid of thy Judgments.* Psalm cxix, 120.

II. Is it not past dispute, that the Rupture between us and the Plantations of N—A—a looks horridly big of wide-spreading Evils? Who can describe them? Is not the Tempest begun?

“Even while I paint this dreadful scene, I start;
“My Bosom scarce can hold its panting Heart.
“Hark! tremble; murmurs in the distant Air,
“Whisper of God, His awful way prepare.”

Rev. Mr. Scott on *Job*:

Should we not begin to prepare to meet our God, by obeying his Call? *Thus saith the Lord, Consider your ways.*—Hagg. i. 5, 7.

III. Does it not highly become every one of us to enter into our *Closets*, there, by the Word of God, to search our Hearts, and try our Ways? Should we

not desire to know what hand our Sins have had in all this? and wherein we have, or do provoke the Lord to anger, that we may not add; but *think on our ways, and turn our feet unto his testimonies, that we may make haste and not delay to keep his commandments*, (Psa. cxix. 59, 60.) and *ceasing to do evil, learn to do well?* Isa. i. 16, 17.

IV. Should we not lay to heart, not only our own personal and relative offences against the Lord, and against his Christ, but also the notoriously infamous, public transgressions of the Kingdom†? Should we not seek the like frame of spirit, which David the Man of God had when he said, “*I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved, because they kept not thy Word. Rivers of Waters run down mine eyes because they keep not thy Law?*” Psalm cxix, 136, 158. Yes, doubtless we ought; and humbly to confess and lament them at the feet of CHRIST JESUS our Lord, the only and ever-prevailing Advocate for such as return to God and their Duty through Him. We should *fight and cry for the abominations which are in the Land*, and implore converting Grace, as well as pardoning Mercy, for the Great Emmanuel’s sake; Breaking off our sins by Righteousness, we should endeavour to stand

† Sins are *national*, according to the opinion of that excellent Man Bishop Wilkins*, when (1) “*Their Practice is very general.*” And O how general is the practice of PROPHANENESS, the dishonours cast on the sacred Name of God by Oaths, Curses, and Perjuries not excepted! How is his Son and Spirit, his Word and Day and Ordinances slighted and affronted? What Injustice prevails, and open Violence in Robberies, Oppression, &c. What Intemperance! Debaucheries! *Adulteries* ‡! What early Initiation of Youth in the school of sensual Pleasure? What Nurseries are Masquerades, Gaming-Houses and Places of Diversion, which together with the general Luxury of the Times eat up all wise and serious Consideration from the mind, and swallow up Fortunes and Estates, and make Thousands and Ten Thousands an easy prey to Temptations to repair their Fortunes, even though they should destroy their *Native Land*, and their Immortal Souls for ever! Ah! The general Spread of these, and too many other sins to mention, render them *national*, and well may we lament and say to BRITAIN, as the mourning Prophet said to Jerusalem when about to be carried Captive, *THY Breach is great like the Sea, who can heal thee?* §—(2) The good Bishop adds, “Public Establishment of Sins or Connivance” at them makes them National: And, (3) “General Insensibility” under sin; this also brings on *National Guilt*.—“Surely,” says a Writer on this subject, “all the sin that we see committed without Grief and Indignation, brings guilt upon ourselves, and is indeed a sort of *consenting thereto*, and we hereby *partake of other mens Sins.*”

* Bishop WILKINS’s Discourse concerning the Gift of Prayer. p. 82.

§ LAM. ii, 13.

‡ Ah, BRITONS, Are *Adulteries* common among you? Are These found among those Persons, whom ye call *noble, honorable and wise*, as much as among the ignoble, ignorant and base? Crimes which *Arabians* and other Nations always reckoned worthy of Death, and which most Philosophers have condemned; even *Adultery* they have judged a heavier crime than *Perjury* itself; “*Apud ARABES aliasque Nationes Adulteris semper capitis Poena fuit: quod plerique philosophi prodidere, qui Adulterium perjurio gravius Crimen censuerunt.*” Alex. ab Alex. lib. iv. c. 1.)—Are these Abominations punished or discountenanced as they deserve?

stand in the Gap to deprecate the deserved storm of divine Wrath: Ezek. ix. 4. *And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the City—of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and cry for the abominations which are done, &c.*

V. Should we not carefully watch over our Temper and the frame of our hearts and Discourses of our lips during this sad season*? Without This we may bring civil contentions into our own streets, into our own houses, and have our Spirits seldom calm and free from the broils of war. Without observing This (in the Fear of God, who sees all the motions of our souls) we shall greatly accumulate the Nation's guilt, daily, by Inflammation of Spirit and Party-Rage. This Watchfulness is necessary lest by censuring measures which we know not the reason of, and by pragmatical officious misjudging in matters too high for us, we condemn the *innocent*, and justify the *guilty*, both which are abominable to the Lord. Prov. xvii, 15. *He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the righteous, even they both are an Abomination to the LORD.*—Shall not *This* make us pray, and watch, and keep guard on the Heart and the Tongue? that most unruly member, a fire, a world of iniquity, boasting great things, defiling the whole body, and which setteth on fire the course of nature, and is set on fire of Hell; so unruly an evil it is, (as the sacred Word declares, and experience every day shews) *full of deadly poison*, James iii. 1, &c. Shall we not hear and fear rather than be proud, passionate, incompetent Disputants?—Let us meekly learn of our meek and lowly Lord and Master, who would *not strive, nor let*

his voice be heard in the Street (but in Humility, Self-denial, and Love.) Matt. xii. 19. Let us receive the exhortation, *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time*, (1 Pet. v. 6.) and comply with the invitation, Hosea, xiv. 1. &c. *O Israel, return unto the Lord, for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.*

VI. Candidly entertain one question more, Is it not an *Invitation* in Season, for pious Protestants, thro' all the Empire of Great Britain, that they would renew the Practice (which was observed by many of them in years past, of the *established Church*, and *Dissenters*, during threatening times) of *secret prayer*, on a certain Day, at a certain Hour, once a Week, as they may agree among themselves; to intreat the special favour of the Most High for our Sovereign King George, his royal House, and all his Realm§. The last form of Invitation, perhaps is the following,—“Among
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§ Portions of holy Scripture to be read in Secret at such devout Exercises are very many. *viz.* LEVIT. Chap. xxvi. DEUT. xxviii. xxxii. JOSHUA, xxiv. PSALMS, li, lxxviii, lxxxii. EZRA, ix. NEHEM. ix. DANIEL, ix. HOSEA, iv. JOEL ii. AMOS iv. JONAH iii. HAG. i. LUKE, xiii. xix, 41—45. REV. ii. iii.

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“ many of the *established Church* were
 “ employ’d every Lord’s-day Evening,
 “ and many *Protestant Dissenters* on
 “ every Wednesday Morning between
 “ seven and eight. *This last* has been
 “ revived in some places, for a year
 “ or two past, and *this notice* is hum-
 “ bly offered as an INVITATION to
 “ such Friends of Religion as shall
 “ read it, that they would join them-
 “ selves to this number.—N. B. The
 “ British Fleet of *Louisbourg*, and the
 “ Squadron going to *Goree* were both
 “ saved as by miracles in 1758, the
 “ former on the *Lord’s-Day*, the latter
 “ on the *Wednesday, the Days of Pray-*
 “ *er.*”—We may add, that the renown’d
 success granted the British Arms on
Minden Plain, Aug. 1. 1759, was on a
Wednesday also.

To close this Address. Shall we still
 remain secure and fearless of evil to
 come? What retain the christian Name,
 and yet be unmoved,

“ When God, provok’d by daring
 crimes,
 Scourges the Madness of the Times?”

unmoved, when yet we are forced to say,

“ See human Nature sunk in shame,
 “ See scandals pour’d on JESU’S
 Name:
 “ The Father wounded thro’ the Son,
 “ The World abus’d, the Soul un-
 done!”

○ is it not becoming the sincere fol-
 lower of *Christ* to add,

“ Arise, my tend’rest thoughts, arise!
 “ To Torrents melt, my streaming
 eyes!
 “ And thou my Heart, with anguish
 feel
 “ Those evils which thou can’st
 not heal.”

Awake therefore from your deadly
 Slumbers all Parents, Instructors of
 Youth, Masters, Heads of Families,
 and you especially who are the under
 Shepherds of *Christ* to feed his lambs
 and sheep! Let all be roused to *Duty*:
 instruct your families, and your flocks,
 going before them in every good word,
 and every good work: Approve your-
 selves to God in your closets: let his
 holy word be read also in your Houf-
 holds, and bless them in the name of
 the Lord daily. Let his Day and Ord-
 nances be honour’d by all under your
 roofs, and your temper and conversa-
 tion at the same time sober, righteous,
 charitable and ornamental!

While we are threaten’d by the Hand
 of God lifted up as if about to smite us,
 let us religiously hearken to his gracious
 Counsel, JEREM. iv, 1, &c. *If thou*
wilt return, O Israel, saith the Lord, re-
turn unto me, and if thou wilt put away
thine abominations out of my sight Then
shalt thou not remove, &c. Break up your
fallow ground, and sow not among thorns,
&c. lest my fury come forth like fire, &c.

“ IT is the God of Glory calls,
 “ O let his Israel hear!
 “ Stop, ye Revolters, in your Course,
 “ O hearken, Come, draw near!

What tho’ in Sins delusive paths
 Ye from your youth have stray’d;
 What tho’ my Messages of Love
 Have been with scorn repay’d;

“ At last return, and Grace divine
 “ Your wandrings shall forget;
 “ If loyal Zeal, and love dethrone
 “ Each Idol from its Seat.

“ Return, and dwell secure on Earth,
 “ As in your Lord’s embrace,
 “ Till in the Land of perfect Joy
 “ Ye find a nobler Place.”

—May we answer this Invitation of God

“ Father of Mercies, lo, we come!
 “ Subdu’d by such a call:
 “ O let the Hand of Grace divine
 “ Reduce, and bless us All!

“ So will we teach the world that Love,
 “ Which we are made to see,
 “ And wand’rers shall with us return,
 “ And bless themselves in Thee.”

